

MENTAL HEALTH

A loss of moral values!

A decrease of true spiritual strengths resulting in a weakening personality seems to be the order of the day!



Can we remedy this state
before it is too late?

A Booklet for Educators
by
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EVERY 10 MINUTES ONE INDIAN ENDS LIFE

Express News Service 1988

Trivandrum, March 6: One person commits suicide every 10 minutes in India, while in the United States someone commits suicide or attempts to commit suicide every minute.

According to the papers presented at the 17th annual conference of the Indian Society of Criminology, on an average out of every 1,000 suicides in the world a day, 100 are in India.

Available figures say that over 50,000 people in the country commit suicide every year and majority of them are men. Studies on suicidology undertaken by various sociologists show that physical illness, mental disorder, economic need, psychic causes and dowry menace are

suicides in the country.

India, which has the highest rate of suicide, is followed by Switzerland, which is followed by India as in the case of other countries. Studies have revealed that dowry deaths are a major cause of suicide. Suicide

LL

road

l health into our
tions !



Mental Health

MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Mental Health is an integral part of general health. It can be promoted by *mental hygiene* which is the practice and use in daily life of specific convictions and behaviour that is conducive to the following :

- a) dealing satisfactorily with the daily events of life.
- b) working out certain roles relating to different events and persons in stressful situations with least distress
- c) resolving conflicts in a self-confident manner
- d) seeking help in the above situations whenever indicated.

Mental Hygiene is in other words a "personality development" effort which grows with the person promoting "personhood" or maturity of emotions and actions. *In the diagram below one can note the components of the human person, or the anatomy of self.*

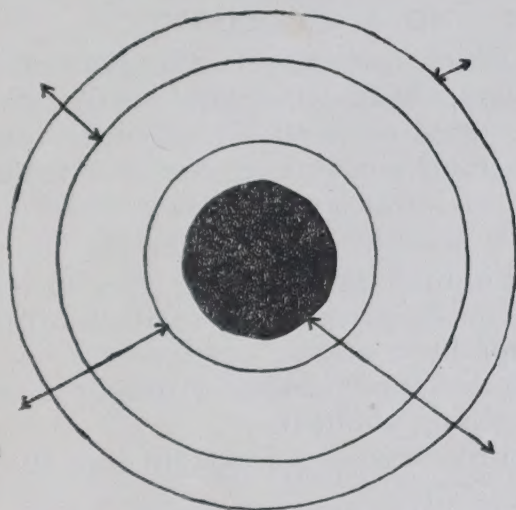
ANATOMY OF SELF

HEART —
Needs
Love &
Sharing

BODY —
Needs Food
for
Growth

MIND —
Needs
Knowledge
for
Growth

SOUL —
Needs
Inspiration
and
Expression
for
Growth



MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

The conviction and belief of a positive self-image and self-acceptance, the behaviour that is consistent with

self-worth and dignity, the understanding that one has to fit into different roles without much distress, the belief that one has to be responsible for one's actions, and that conflicts are a part of life that must be faced are all part of a positive mental health programme.

Freud defined mental health as the "ability to love and to work." To love is to be able to enter into a relationship of mutuality, that is giving and receiving love.

A mentally healthy person, he said is one who is strong enough to resolve conflicts between *impulses* and *morals*, that is, he can choose between expressing feelings and withholding such expression, and between pursuing gratification of needs and postponing such a quest for gratification.

He|She can thus make a healthy rational choice and control any tendency to compulsive behaviour. Repression ignores this and thus consumes energy which could go into productive behaviour.

According to Jung, a mentally healthy person is a responsible person who has found a meaning for his existence and has integrated conflicting elements of his personality into a unique and harmonious pattern.

FEMININITY AND MASCULINITY

Having the correct understanding of one's personality i.e. Femininity and Masculinity will ensure that men and women understand each other and more important that they develop their personality to their fullest potential which is an essential requirement for sound mental health.

1. Femininity implies the special charisma of affiliation or forming relationships.
2. Empathy.
3. Emotion i.e. feeling strongly enough to do something about it.
4. Intuitiveness — a foresight into the future and Creativity.

Masculinity on the other hand has the special character of

1. Being direct
2. Logical

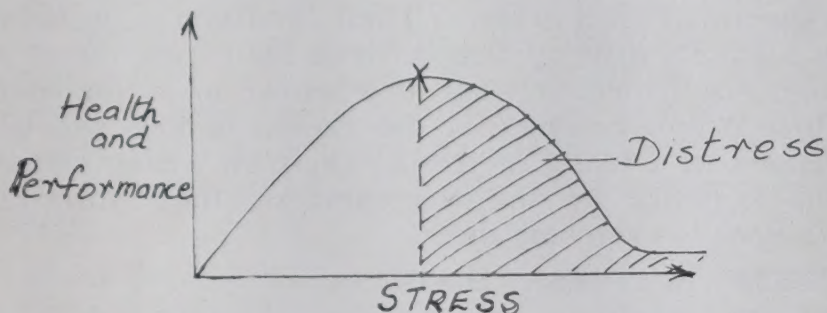
3. Rational
4. Aggressive
5. Physical

Hence the ancient Greek symbols to represent man was the arrow and for women the mirror reflecting her feelings in her countenance.

ANXIETY

Modern psychologists have done an admirable service in studying anxieties, revealing a phase of human nature which has been to some extent closed to us. But the course of anxiety is deeper than the psychological.

Optimal Stress in Relation to Overload



One of the favourite psychological descriptions of modern man is to say that he has an anxiety complex. Psychology is more right than it suspects, but for a more profound reason than it knows. There is no doubt that anxiety has been increased and complicated by our metropolitan and industrialised civilisation. An increasing number of persons are afflicted with neuroses, complexes, fears, irritabilities and ulcers they are perhaps not so much "run down" as "wound up," not so much set on fire by the sparks of daily life as they are burning up from internal combustion.

Few of them have the felicity of the good Negro woman who said, "When I works, I works hard, when I sits, I sits loose, and when I thinks, I goes to sleep."

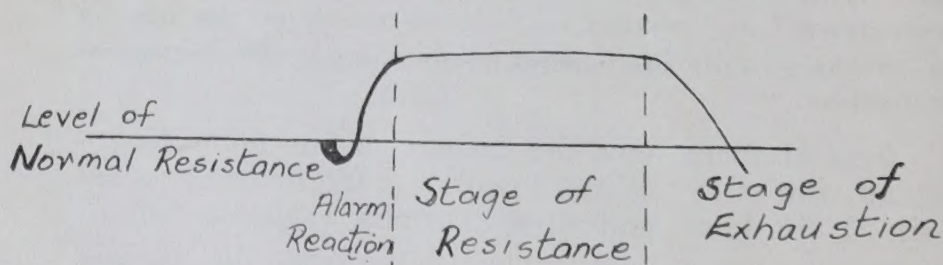
But modern anxiety is different from the anxiety of previous and more normal ages in two ways. In older days men were anxious about their souls, but *modern*

anxiety is principally concerned with the body, the major worries of today are economic security, health, the complexion, wealth, social prestige, and sex. To read modern advertisements one would think that the greatest calamity that could befall a human being would be to have pimples or a cough in the T-zone. This over emphasis on corporal security is not healthy, it has begotten a generation that is much more concerned about having life belts to wear on a sea journey than about the cabin it will occupy and enjoy. The *second characteristics* of modern anxiety is that it is not fear of objective, a vague fear of what one believes would be dangerous if it happened. That is why it is so difficult to deal with people who have today's types of anxiety, it does no good to tell them that there is no outside danger, because the danger that they fear is inside of them and therefore is abnormally real to them. Their condition is aggravated by a sense a dispropotion between their own forces and those marshalled by what they believe to be the enemy. These people become like fish caught in nets and birds trapped in a snare, increasing their own entanglements and anxieties by the fierceness of their disorderly exertions to overcome them.

STRESS. EUSTRESS. DISTRESS.

Hans Selye has done the most work in the effect of Stress on man in the University of Montreal. He has described the 'Gas,' General Adaptation Syndrome in three phases (1) the alarm reaction (2) the stage of resistance and (3) the stage of exhaustion.

THREE PHASES of GAS



Most illnesses occur in stage three, which is when repair fails. When the diet is adequate, a person can

go for years withstanding tremendous stress with little apparent harm. If the raw materials are insufficient to meet the needs, there comes the stage of exhaustion, disease develops and eventually death threatens. During every illness we are in one of these three phases of stress, and to regain our health, our diets must be planned accordingly. Diet is not only for the body, but also for the mind, since body and mind work in close harmony. A disturbance in one, disturbs the other.

EUSTRESS AND DISTRESS

Stress is good and needed for people to grow to their full potential. So when we talk of stress management, we do not mean eliminating all stress. The primary stress response is the fight or flight response. A response helps to ensure our survival and any threat, physical or symbolic can bring about this response. Now while physical arousal to physical threat is appropriate, physical arousal to symbolic or emotional threat is inappropriate. It is longer in duration, is not easily dissipated and is physically detrimental to the body.

Hans Selye says that stress is a process that enables the body to resist the stressor in the best possible way by enhancing the functioning of the organ system best able to respond to it.

He calls optimal stress levels eustress, and this reaches a maximal point where stress increases health and performance. He calls overload, distress, where stress increases, but health and performance decrease."

DISTRESS OR NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO STRESS — MANIFESTATION

1. Mood and Disposition Signs

Worry, over-excited, insecure, insomnia, confused, forgetful, uncomfortable, ill at ease, and nervous.

2. Visceral Signs

Stomach, upset, heart palpitations, profuse sweating, moist hands, feeling faint or light headed, face hot or flushed, experience of cold chills.

3. Musculoskeletal Signs

Fingers and hands shake or tremble, cannot sit or stand still, twitches, headache, tense, stiff muscles, stuttering, stammering, stiff neck.

Selye Says that our problems evolve quickly, but our bodies evolve slowly, very slowly. People like to assume that the body always works intelligently. But this is not so. The body is like the mind, it too, gets confused and makes mistakes.

Where stress is concerned, what usually happens is that mind and body make the same mistakes together. Selye says that stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it; it can be pleasant or unpleasant. Stress is not something to be avoided. Complete freedom from stress is death.

All illnesses have a psychosomatic component. All disorders are psychosomatic, in the sense that both mind and body are involved in their aetiology."

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF EMOTIONAL ORIGIN

1. Exhibiting *nervous mannerisms*, e.g. biting nails, jittery speech, shivering.
2. *Overeating*. Some people eat a lot more than usual when they are under stress.
3. *Excessive talking*. Sometimes a person may become unusually talkative and literally feels compelled to talk at all times.
4. *Escaping into drugs*, alcohol or work.
5. *Ignoring it*, hoping that denial will help get rid of it.
6. *Withdrawal*. A person may withdraw within himself or to some other refuge to cope with stress. He may become anti-social and adopt an ascetic life style.
7. *Give-up*. Many who attempt or commit suicide are those who have decided to give up fighting their stresses and seek permanent release.

HEALTHY MANAGEMENT OF STRESS OR EUSTRESS

This is a good or positive response to stress.

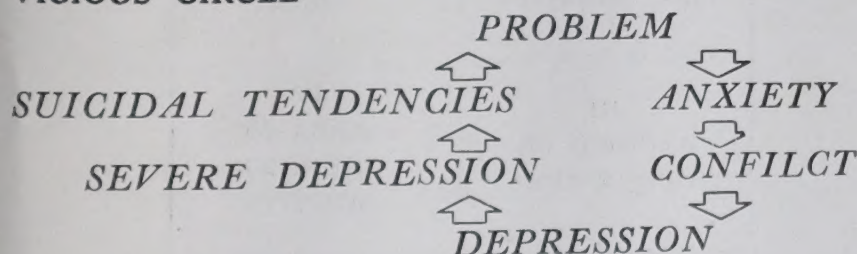
- a) Talking it over with a friend who is sympathetic and understanding.
- b) Taking an inventory of the stress factors in our lives.
- c) Emotional inoculation. By this we mean preparing oneself mentally and emotionally for the stressful event. A person taking an examination can prepare himself by ensuring that he studies, as well as working out alternatives should he fail. Because he is prepared for the worst possible outcome, he may be able to take it better. In this way he/she avoids "stressor" factors.

MEASURES TO PROMOTE EUSTRESS

- d) Relaxation and body awareness exercises.
- e) Making changes in diet, life style etc.
Being assertive. Center. Imaging and focussing on self.
- g) Seeking professional help.

Depression is to give into the pressures or stresses of life and go below the normal and healthy feeling of well being. It is a negative and self destructive reaction and if unchecked can have serious implications for the individual.

VICIOUS CIRCLE



Only counselling can break this vicious circle. At the stage of Severe Depression, professional and psychiatric help and even hospitalization may be necessary. Hence we can see how important mental hygiene is, since it can convert stress into eustress and solve the problem or resolve the conflict.

It is here that spiritual counselling is essential to give the individual belief in him/herself and that God cares and loves them, even if all others have disappointed them.

CASE STUDY

Ramesh's father had a quick temper and Ramesh was often his target. At first Ramesh bitterly resented this injustice and felt humiliated. He tried to react by staying long hours out of the house and this resulted in poor results in studies and worsening relations at home. Ramesh blamed all this on his father. Ramesh went to a Counsellor who helped him to understand that his father loved him and though he had a quick temper he forget about his anger soon after. Ramesh realised his own reaction was childish and that he harmed himself most. He started staying home more and whenever his father lost his temper he would wait till he had cooled down and then tell him his side of the story. This happened over a period of 6 months and they are now good friends much to the relief of Ramesh's mother and the entire family, who had all been adversely affected.

AWARENESS IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

I AREA OF FREE ACTIVITY	II BLIND AREA
III AVOIDED OR HIDDEN AREA	IV AREA OF UNKNOWN ACTIVITY

In quadrant 1 are the behaviours and feelings known to an individual and also to other people. In quadrant II called the blind area, are aspects of the individuals of which he is not aware but which are known to other people. The avoided or hidden area, quadrant III, involves personal characteristics which the individual

knows about but does not wish to reveal to others. In quadrant IV, the area of unknown activity are aspects of behaviour and motivation unknown to the individual and also unknown to others.

It is very helpful for each person to do this EXERCISE and then discuss what is listed in each area with a friend or counsellor (*LUFT*).

CLASS ACTIVITY

1. Exercise in Emotional Status.
2. Do you have Self Confidence ?
3. Do you have will power ?

AN EXERCISE IN EMOTIONAL STATUS

List 1

Suspicion
Frustration
Discouragement
Fear
Disappointment
Anger
Guilt
Hostility
Jealousy
Loneliness
Inferiority
Rejection
Envy
Impatience
Boredom
Sadness

List 2

Peace
Confidence
Exhilaration
Hope
Friendliness
Joy
Enthusiasm
Relief
Trust
Affection
Contentment
Curiosity
Satisfaction
Pride
Excitement
Acceptance

Pick out an emotion from List 1 and 2 and describe to other group members a recent experience which you had which makes you feel that emotion. Let the other members of the group respond to you. Try to talk in depth about the feeling.

Complete the following statements

1. When I join a new group I
2. I feel most comfortable in a group when

3. I like people who
4. Helping others make me feel
5. I feel angry when
6. I feel happy when

Now let the listener or listeners complete this statement :

“Towards you right now I feel.....”

Now let all share with each other what they felt about this exercise, what they feel about each other, what they have gathered from this experience.

Discuss how best you could have adjusted to stressful feelings. Decide on how to act in the future.

A TEST FOR PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

2. DO YOU HAVE SELF-CONFIDENCE ?

Here is a test you may like to try. Answer “YES” or “NO” to the questions before you turn to the key at the end.

1. Do you believe that you are wanted ? Yes|No
2. Do you take success and failure without becoming unduly elated or depressed ? Yes|No
3. Are you good at coping with emergencies ? Yes|No
4. Do you regard yourself as a pleasant personality ? Yes|No
5. Are you seldom at a loss for words ? Yes|No
6. Are you rarely worried about what others think of you ? Yes|No
7. Do you seldom feel the urge to justify ? Yes|No
8. Is it difficult for people to embarrass you ? Yes|No
9. Can you laugh at your own mistakes ? Yes|No
10. Can you apologize gracefully without feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable ? Yes|No
11. Can you discuss without getting upset ? Yes|No
12. Would you stand up and ask questions in class ? Yes|No
13. Do you enjoy the company of the opposite sex ? Yes|No

14. Do you look forward to meeting new people ? Yes|No
15. Is it easy for you to talk to strangers and get to know them ? Yes|No
16. Can you remain calm when people are unco-operative ? Yes|No
17. Do you think that you are loved ? Yes|No
18. Can you be relied upon to cope with most situations ? Yes|No
19. Do you seldom stammer or blush ? Yes|No
20. Would you be thrilled to chair a meeting or lead a discussion ?

KEY TO QUIZ

Count 5 marks for every yes. Above 75 is very good. 65 - 75 is good. Below 65 can improve.

How to Gain Self Confidence and improve your score.

DO YOU HAVE SELF-CONFIDENCE ?

Many people feel that problems and difficulties are often more than they can cope with. They feel beaten by life and constantly weighed down by problems. They lose faith in themselves and their ability to make a success of their lives. There is no worse experience than losing one's self-confidence. If a person doesn't believe in himself he is frustrated and beaten at every turn.

TO GAIN SELF-CONFIDENCE — REMEMBER

1. You are different from everyone else because you are unique. This means that you are important. If you were important, how would you dress, how would you walk, how would you feel ? When you have pictured these things, put them into practice.
2. Choose for yourself some goal which is within the bounds of possibility. This is what you must try to achieve.
3. Having fixed your aim, proceed towards it gradually. Plan for it and arrange your life in such a way as to fit in with your aim.

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4. Learn from your mistakes, but never let them deflect you from your goal.
5. If you lack faith in yourself it is essential that you set out to be interested in other people. We are only hesitant to meet people because we are more interested in ourselves. Make a hobby of people, and remember all people are interesting to those who are prepared to find out where their interest lies.
6. Learn more about other people. Begin to care about them and as you lose yourself in caring passionately for them you will find your self-confidence restored.
7. One of the greatest causes of loss of self-confidence is tension. This means we must learn to relax. Practice letting go. Have a few minutes every day when you consciously let go of life and its problems. These short "vacations" mean so much and it's surprising the difference it makes.
8. Always do the best you can in facing a situation and then leave the issue to God. If you have done your best you can do no more.

3. DO YOU HAVE WILL POWER ?

1. Can you *convince* yourself of your strength of will ? Your possibilities are greater than you think. This is true on the natural plane alone. From the religious point of view, your certainty is still greater. God has a task for you to do, and he will give you all you need to do it well.
2. Can you *conform* your exterior behaviour to your interior ideal ? Your exterior behaviour greatly influences your thinking. Make your exterior calm, firm and virile. Cultivate a healthy, straight posture. Don't lounge or drag your feet.
3. Can you *profit* by every occasion to exercise energetic action ? You must repeat voluntary acts of energetic effort. A practical method is the following.

Determine a certain number of wilful acts to be accomplished daily for a period of ten days. Do not relent till you have accomplished them all.

4. Can you take *pleasure* in work and hardship ? This may sound impossible, but work can be as enjoyable as play, and the satisfaction it can bring you is far deeper than the pleasure you get from fun.
5. Can you *polarize* your energies through an apt slogan ? A good slogan is an effective stimulant. Invent your own personal formula and repeat it especially in times of discouragement. Examples, "*I shall overcome.*" *God gave me life to conquer*" etc.
6. Can you seek *perfection* in all you do ? "What is worth doing is worth doing well" : Few things help will-power more than applying a maximum of concentrated energy to simple tasks.
7. Can you leave a job half-done ? First draw up a definite plan of action; then, stick to it. This will also save you undue worry and loss of time. What tires you most is not what you have done, but what you should have done and did not do. Are you convinced of this truth ?
8. Can you not give into the first feeling of *tiredness* ? Do not underestimate your working power. If you give in to the first temptation to stop working real fatigue will soon develop and you will lose the day. So react promptly.
9. Can you be flexible, but tenacious ? If you want to succeed in any walk of life, you need tenacity, a certain 'gentle stubbornness.' As that great soldier, Marshal Foch said, "*Nothing resists tenacity, But if you accept the very thought of defeat, you are vanquished beforehand. Victory belongs to the man who remains firm longer than his opponent,*" and "*Nothing ventured, nothing gained*"

To every Question the Answer should be 'Yes'

- * Know what you want-and clear-cut decisions will follow.
- * Energetic action is the next requisite.
- * Follow through with continuous effort.

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